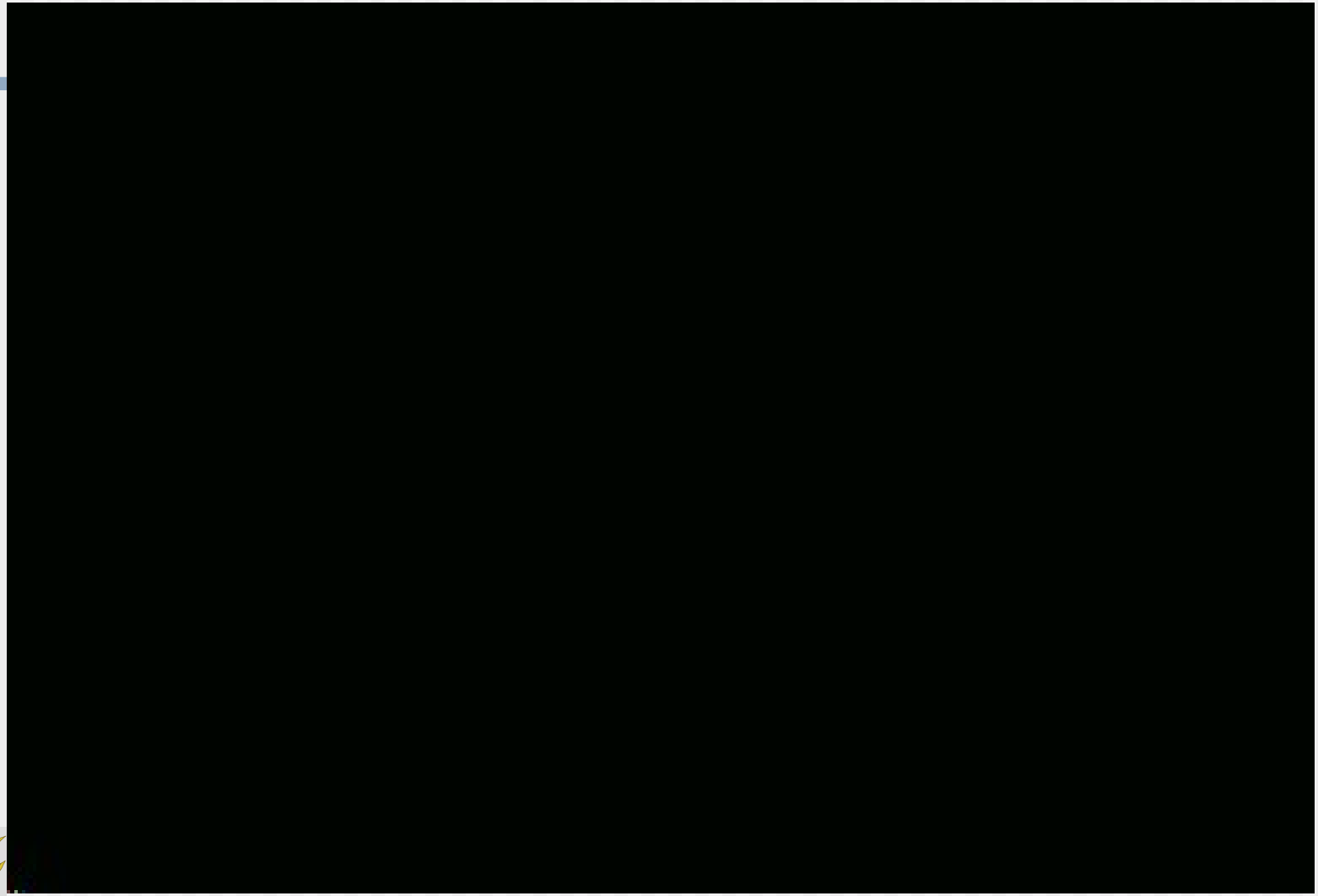
The Basics of Effective Interpersonal Communication:

This briefing will provide an overview of the basic verbal and non-verbal communication skills, that can be used to increase the overall effectiveness in your units.

FAILED COMMUNICATION:



Before Beginning...

Take a minute to answer the following questions to yourself. You will be tested at the end of this brief.

- What do I already know about interpersonal communication?
- How do I think I will be able to apply my learning on the job?

Agenda Topics:

- What communication is
- Why and how we communicate
- Barriers to communication
- Sharing ideas
- Getting information from others
- Giving constructive feedback
- Body language

What is Communication?:

- What do you think communication is? How would you define it?

Take a few seconds to answer…

Communication:

- Communication is defined as the interchange of thoughts or opinions through **shared symbols**; e.g. language, words, phrases

- Some synonyms of the word communication are: message, directive, contact, conversing, discussing, and talking

Four Facets of Communication:

- Sender
- Receiver
- Information
- Behavior

Four Facets of Communication, cont'd:

- In any communication:
  - The *Sender* is the person trying to communicate a message
  - The *Receiver* is the person at whom the message is directed
  - A message is sent to convey *information*
  - Information is meant to change *behavior*

Shared Symbols:

- Sometimes when we communicate we assume we are using **shared symbols** when we might not be
- Think about the term “ASAP”, “as soon as possible”. What does it *really* mean?
- Look at how the meaning might change in the situations on the next slide…

Shared Symbols, cont'd:

- The 21st TSC CSM calls. He needs some detailed information ASAP; but you are already rather busy.
- A coworker comes to you for help with a task. They need you ASAP; but you have another job to finish.
- Your supervisor, whom you like to please, asks you to take care of a mission ASAP; but you already have a stack of other jobs to finish.

Shared Symbols, cont'd:

- The TSC CSM calls. He needs some detailed information asap; but you are already rather busy.

- *In this situation, you might interpret "asap" as "when I have finished all of my own work and have a chance to get to it. It might be tomorrow or the next day."*

Shared Symbols, cont'd:

- A coworker comes to you for help and they need you asap; but you have another job to finish.
- *In this situation, you might interpret "asap" as "after I have finished my own work.*

Shared Symbols, cont'd:

- Your supervisor, whom you like to please, asks you to take care of a mission asap; but you already have a stack of other jobs to finish.

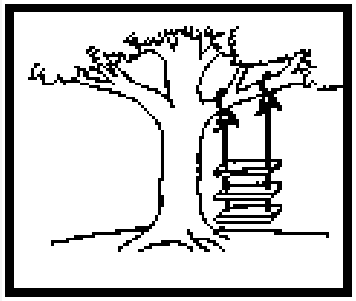
- *In this situation, you might interpret "asap" as "I'll do this now and finish my other work afterwards".*

Shared Symbols, cont'd:

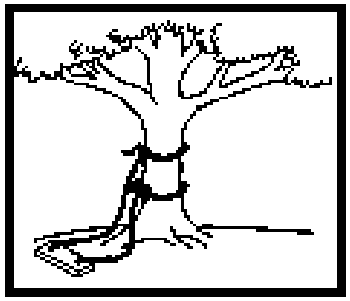
- In the previous examples, we've seen the meaning of "asap" change from "in a few days" to "immediately".

- Shared symbols are not always completely shared. The message intended is not always the message received.

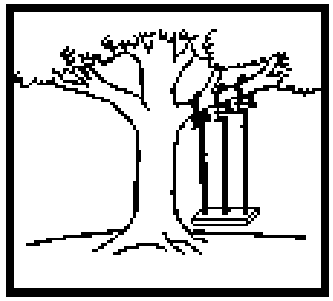
Missed Communication:



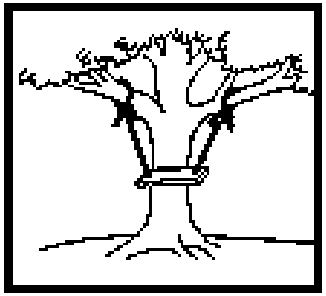
As the Manager Requested it.



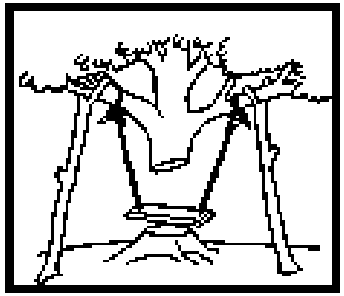
As Purchasing ordered it.



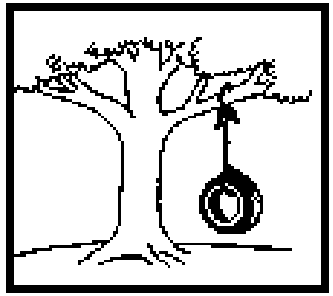
As Marketing wrote it up.



As the Art Dept. designed it.



As the Supervisor implemented it.



What the Employee really wanted!

Why Do We Communicate?:

- What do you think?

Take a few seconds to answer…

Why We Communicate:

- We communicate to:
  - Share our ideas and opinions
  - Provide feedback to others
  - Get information from others
  - Gain power and influence
  - Develop social relationships
  - Maintain self-expression and our culture

How Do We Communicate?:

- Think of the many ways in which you communicate...

Take a few seconds to answer...

How We Communicate:

- We communicate and build interpersonal relationships through:
  - Speech
  - Writing
  - Listening
  - Non-verbal language
  - Music: Rap, Rock and Roll, Jazz, Ole Skool.

Choosing Your Medium:

- Depending upon the situation, one method of communication may be better than another.
  - In person: one-to-one
  - In person: meetings, small groups
  - In person: presentations, large groups
  - Letter
  - Memo
  - Note
  - Email
  - Voice mail

Choosing Your Medium, cont'd:

- To determine the best medium for your message determine:
  - What you as the *sender* need to achieve
  - What the *receiver* needs to know. What the *receiver* wants to know
  - How detailed, important, and or personal the *information* in the message is
  - Which *behavior* you want to influence and how

Choosing Your Medium, cont'd:

- How would you communicate…
  - an organizational change in your unit
  - the introduction of a new employee
  - a reprimand

Take a few moments to answer…

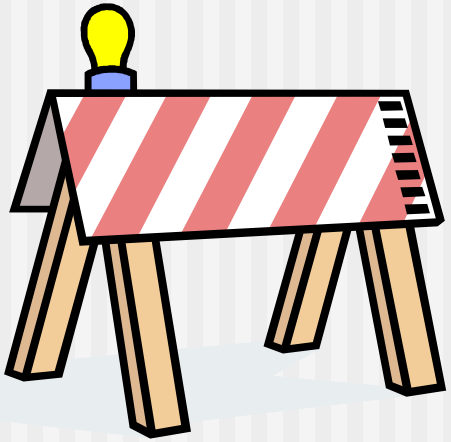
Choosing Your Medium, cont'd:

- The best way to communicate…
  - an organizational change in your unit by *memo and small group meetings*
  - the introduction of a new employee by *group and one-on-one meetings*
  - a reprimand in a *one-on-one private meeting*

Barriers to Communication:

- What are barriers to communication that exist in any work setting?

Take a few seconds to answer…



Barriers to Communication, cont'd:

- Unclear process: The receiver and sender may not share the same language, slang, jargon, vocabulary, symbols
- Chain of command: There may be too many layers that a message passes through between sender and receiver
- Size of an organization, geographic distance: Large numbers of receivers require good message sending methods
- Personal limitations: Physical and mental disabilities, and differences in intelligence and education may interfere with mutual understanding

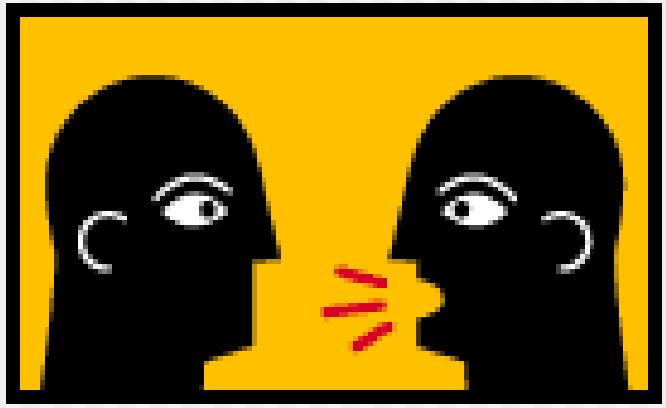
Barriers to Communication, cont'd:

- Other Communication Barriers include:
  - Human nature: Peoples' egos, prejudices, and traditions can get in the way
  - Conflicting feelings, goals, opinions: If people feel on opposite sides of an issue they may not share
  - Power: The idea that knowledge is power can lead to information hoarding

Sharing Your Ideas:

- Why and when is it necessary to share your ideas?

Take a few seconds to answer…



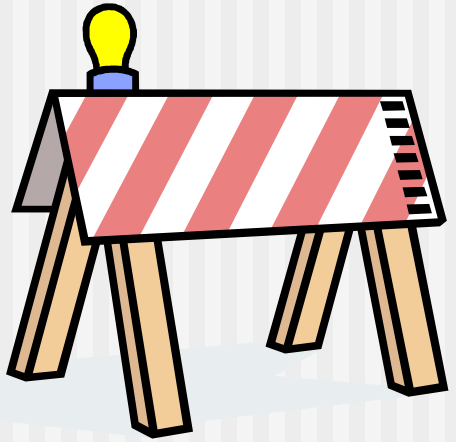
Share Your Ideas to…

- State an opinion or position
- Give instructions or directions
- Announce a change
- Make presentations
- Participate in meetings
- Give information in emergencies
- Communicate the organizational mission, vision, and values

Obstacles to Sharing Ideas:

- What can make sharing ideas difficult?

Take a few seconds to answer…



Obstacles to Sharing Ideas, cont'd:

- Your own shyness
- Fear of rejection
- Peer pressure
- Unorganized thinking
- Others possibly becoming defensive
- Physical disabilities (impaired sight, hearing, speech)
- Having to deal with aggressive people

Speak for yourself…

- To ensure your messages are clear, speak for yourself, not for others:
  - Speaking for yourself sounds like:
    - *I, me, my…*
    - *I think, I feel, I want to know that…*
  - Speaking for no one sounds like:
    - *It, some people, everyone, they decided…*
  - Speaking for others sounds like:
    - *We, you, John, Mary said…*

Ideas "SHARE" Model:

- **S**tate the main point of your message
- **H**ighlight other important points
- **A**ssure the receiver's understanding
- **R**eact to how the receiver responds
- **E**mphasize/summarize your main ideas

Getting Good Information:

- Why is it necessary to get good information from others?

Take a few seconds to answer…

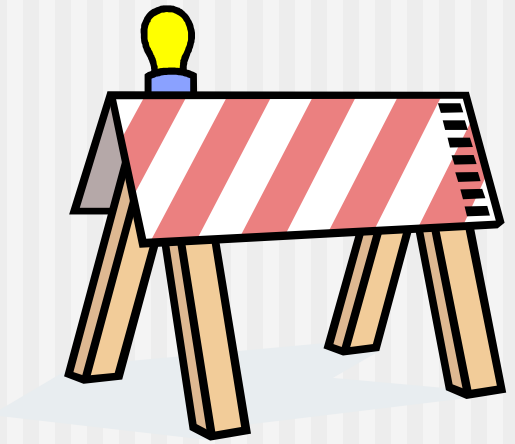
Get Good Information to…

- Find out facts and details
- Get directions or instructions
- Try to understand another's point of view
- Help someone solve a problem
- Resolve a team conflict
- Solve work problems
- and other ideas you may have thought of

Obstacles to getting good information:

- What can make getting good information difficult?

Take a few seconds to answer…



Obstacles to getting good information:

- Lack of trust
- Assuming you already know it all
- Jumping to conclusions
- Not valuing diverse opinions
- Weak reading skills
- Weak listening skills
- Weak questioning skills
- and other ideas you may have thought of

The power of listening:

The philosopher ‘Epictetus’ stressed the power of listening in this quote:

“Nature gave us one tongue and two ears, so we could hear twice as much as we speak.”

Listen Actively:

- **Prepare to listen** by focusing on the speaker
- **Control and eliminate distractions** so that you can focus on the message. Don't do anything else (writing, reading, email) but listen
- **Establish appropriate eye contact** to show interest
- **See listening as an opportunity** to get information, share another's views, and broaden your own knowledge

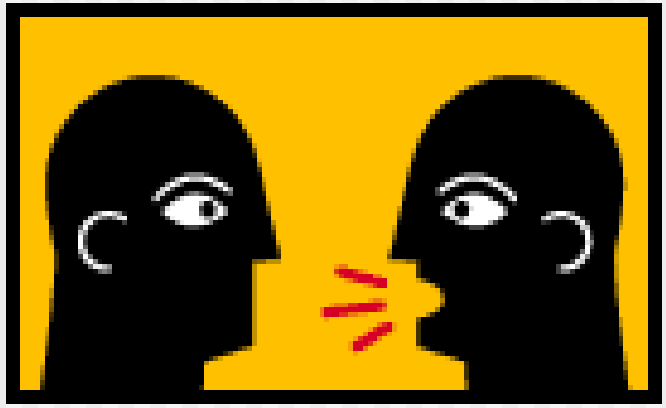
Listen Actively, contd:

- **Create a need to listen** by thinking about what you can learn from the speaker
- **Set aside the time to listen** so that you won't feel rushed or become distracted by other responsibilities
- **Don't prejudge the message** based on who is delivering it. Focus instead on the content of the message.
- **Monitor the way you listen** by asking yourself questions such as "Did I really pay attention or was I thinking about what I was going to say next"?

Giving Feedback:

- Why is it necessary to give constructive feedback to others?

Take a few seconds to answer…



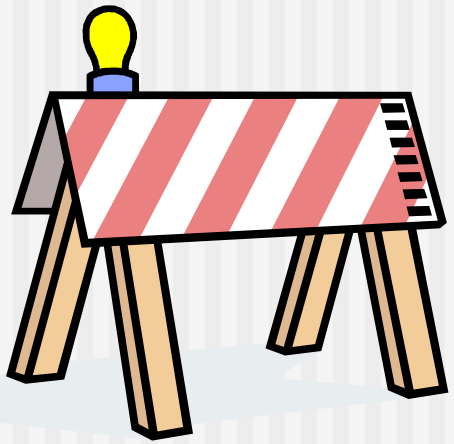
Give Feedback when…

- Someone asks for your opinion
- Work errors occur frequently
- A coworker's habits disturb you
- A coworker's behavior has negative consequences
- There are unresolved problems
- and other ideas you may have thought of

Obstacles to Giving Constructive Feedback:

- What makes it hard to give constructive feedback?

Take a few seconds to answer…



Obstacles to Giving Constructive Feedback, contd:

- Separating the person from the problem
- Others becoming defensive or angry
- Fear of negative consequences (especially if the other person is a supervisor)
- Dealing with potential conflict
- Avoiding hurt feelings
- Preserving relationships
- Choosing the right time so that the other person is most receptive

Body Language:

- Nonverbal communication, known as “body language” sends strong positive and negative signals. This is how much it influences any message:

Words	8%
Tone of voice	34%
Non-verbal cues	58%
Message	**100%**

Body Language Includes...

- Face
- Figure
- Focus
- Territory
- Tone
- Time

Ideas to Walk Away with…

- People are always communicating
- The meaning intended by the sender is never exactly the message gotten by the receiver
- We can help to overcome barriers to communication by being aware of them
- Verbal and non-verbal communication is important in sending our messages

Okay, Test Time…

1. Communication is defined as the interchange of thoughts or opinions through shared symbols.

   True___ False___

2. The four facets of interpersonal communication are sender, receiver, information, and behavior.

   True___ False___

3. Unclear process; chain of command; large size of an organization or geographic distance; personal limitations; human nature; conflicting feelings, goals, opinions; and power are examples of barriers to communication.

   True___ False___

Test.....Answers

1. Communication is defined as the interchange of thoughts or opinions through shared symbols.

   True

2. The four facets of interpersonal communication are sender, receiver, information, and behavior.

   True

3. Unclear process; chain of command; large size of an organization or geographic distance; personal limitations; human nature; conflicting feelings, goals, opinions; power are examples of barriers to communication.

   True

Apply What You've Learned:

- What new things did you learn about interpersonal communication?
- How will you be able to apply your learning on the job?
- What are some of the barriers
- Am I communicating effectively
- Do I listen to others